

An article that my local daily (the Columbus [Ohio] Dispatch) picked up from the Los Angeles Times states, in part, "The conservative-leaning Sinclair Broadcast Group, whose television outlets reach nearly a quarter of the nation's homes with TV, is ordering its stations to pre-empt regular [prime time] programming days before the Nov. 2 election to air a film that attacks Sen. John F. Kerry's activism against the Vietnam war ***." The program is titled, "Stolen Honor: Wounds That Never Heal." The producers of the film accuse Kerry of "worsening their ordeal by prolonging the [Vietnam] war." (The logic of how one prolongs a war by protesting against it escapes me.)

Sinclair is claiming that this is a "news" feature. As a member of the public that owns the airwaves, I disagree that this is news. This is nothing less than a free political advertisement for George W. Bush. It is illegal and immoral. It is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation, something that our current president will no doubt allow to continue, if he remains consistent (and he is consistent). Media ownership rules need to be strengthened,

not weakened.

Two Sinclair affiliates in central Ohio, WSYX and WTTE, are scheduled to broadcast this political drök on Friday, October 22, 2004. These stations do not own the airwaves, nor does Sinclair. I do, along with my neighbors, you, and every other American. Sinclair holds licenses to use these airwaves free of charge, and is therefore legally obligated to use it to serve the public interest, and not their own selfish interest. The fact that this can happen in America is, quite frankly, disgraceful.

Sinclair's actions demonstrate their ability and willingness to violate the spirit, and perhaps the letter, of the First Amendment. They are abusing their license to use MY airwaves to broadcast politically motivated lies and distortions with which I do not agree. They cannot use MY airwaves to spread THEIR political views. I do not have to pay for THEIR soapbox. It is a trespass upon property that I own conjointly with the rest of the American public. I will be damaged as a result.

A company such as Sinclair, that violates its compact

with the public to
use its license
responsibly,
deserves to lose its
license. They
should be forced to
pay for their own
soapbox. Thank you.